

**CALIFORNIA WILDLIFE HABITAT RELATIONSHIPS SYSTEM**  
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B460 MacGillivray's Warbler *Oporornis tolmiei*  
Family: Parulidae Order: Passeriformes Class: Aves

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#### DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

An uncommon to common, summer resident of dense brush in moist habitats. Frequents valley foothill riparian, coastal Douglas-fir and redwood, montane riparian, and, in migration, desert riparian habitats. Breeds in interior mountains up to about 2800 m (9000 ft) in the south (Garrett and Dunn 1981), and to 2400 m (8000 ft) in the north (Gaines 1977b). Also breeds coastally from Monterey Co. north (McCaskie et al. 1979, 1988). Less common and more local as a breeder in mountains south of Sierra Nevada. A common migrant in southern interior and less common coastally. Less abundant in interior and more abundant coastally in north. An uncommon to fairly common migrant on Farallon and Channel Islands (DeSante and Ainley 1980, Garrett and Dunn 1981).

#### SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

**Feeding:** Apparently eats mostly insects. Forages low in shrubs or on ground in dense thickets. Gleans foliage and branches and scrapes and probes ground litter. Young may take sap from sapsucker drillings in willows (Mengel 1964, Ehrlich et al. 1988).

**Cover:** Willow, alder, and other dense shrubs in riparian areas or in moist woodlands provide cover at all seasons. Drier shrub habitats near water used to a lesser extent.

**Reproduction:** Nest usually placed 0.6 to 2 m (2-6 ft) above ground in a shrub in a moist thicket; sometimes in ground herbage.

**Water:** Frequents areas near water.

**Pattern:** Riparian thickets of willow, alder, other species, woodlands, and forests with moist, dense understory are preferred habitats.

#### SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

**Activity Patterns:** Yearlong, diurnal activity.

**Seasonal Movements/Migration:** Migrants pass through from mid-April into June, and again from mid-August into October (DeSante and Ainley 1980). Breeding grounds at higher elevations usually not occupied until May; breeding areas generally deserted by mid-September. A few move upslope postbreeding in willows and meadows as high as timberline (Gaines 1977b). Small numbers regularly observed in lowlands into October, but usually gone by November. Wintering individuals reported regularly; mostly from San Diego Co., but as far north as Monterey Co. (McCaskie et al. 1988).

**Home Range:** No information found. In Idaho, Johnston (1949) reported 2.5 pairs per 40

ha (100 ac) in a Douglas-fir clearcut with no groundcover, and 10 pairs per 40 ha (100 ac) in a selectively logged Douglas-fir area with dense ground cover. Density in Wyoming was 10 per 40 ha (100 ac) in a willow-sedge swamp, 30 per 40 ha (100 ac) in a flatland aspen stand, and 85 per 40 ha (100 ac) in a scrub-meadow (Salt 1957).

**Territory:** May be territorial on wintering ground (Ehrlich et al. 1988).

**Reproduction:** Nests from May through July with peak activity in June. Lays 3-6 eggs, usually 4. Incubation 11-13 days, by female only. Altricial nestlings tended by both parents until fledging in 8 or 9 days (Harrison 1978).

**Niche:** Subject to predation by accipiters, small mammals, and snakes. Apparently rarely parasitized by cowbirds (Bent 1953).

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